



COMMUNITY INPUT Update for the Austin City Council August 2, 2012

This report provides public comments and input on the bond development process provided via email sent to bonddevelopment@austintexas.gov and voicemails left on the bond phone hotline (512) 539-0060 between the last Bond Election Advisory Task Force meeting on May 21st, 2012 and July 31st, 2012.

Staff organized the public comments below, based on the following categories: Bond Package Development, Affordable Housing, City Facilities, Parks & Open Space, Transportation/Mobility, Community-Based Projects, and Other Comments.

Bond Package Development

- My husband and I have lived in Austin for 30 years. We are concerned about safety and affordability of the city. Please consider these priorities for all areas of the city. Sidewalks are urgently needed for safety in some sections; our children are our future. I urge you to reduce the amount of the proposed bond package to reign in spending and allow people to stay within the city limits.
- Reduce the amount of the total bond package to \$100-200M maximum. Reduce the funding allocated to affordable housing to 17% of the total bond package, or \$17M-34M (or \$51M) for a total bond package of \$100M-200M (or \$300M). The 17% ratio represents the ratio recommended by citizens (workshops and online survey) and the task advisory force. More funding for neighborhood sidewalks and much less for trails. Instead of the task force recommended \$30M for sidewalks and \$51.75M for trails, I recommend \$45M for sidewalks and \$5.75M for trails (for the near-term urgent needs such as greenbelts and preserves, and bikeways). Fund only the projects that were identified as "urgent near-term needs" by city staff. This quickly reduces the total bond package from \$659M to \$300M. Review these urgent needs and reduce further them to \$100-200M max. For instance, some of the "urgent needs" identified by staff in Parks and Open Spaces are not that urgent. I suspect the same applies to the other 3 categories. Fully fund the cemeteries to \$4M. Currently they are receiving \$2M, but they need \$4M at least. The cemeteries have a critical urgent near-term need that was not identified by city staff, even though the cemeteries meet the 4 criteria to be included as an urgent near-term need: the cemeteries are a public safety issue, there is serious infrastructure failure (facilities, roads and irrigation), there is a significant degradation of services, and State law is not being followed. This funding is needed in part to install new irrigation for heritage trees at 4 public cemeteries to prevent losing more irreplaceable heritage trees. Over 300 heritage trees have died at Oakwood, Oakwood Annex, Evergreen and AMP in the last 4 years due to lack of water. Cemetery stakeholders support irrigation installation before restoration of historical facilities. Fully fund the Dougherty Center to \$4M. This was classified as an urgent near-term need, but it's only getting half of the funding that city staff identified. Eliminate the \$15M for the Waller creek and trail improvements. The Waller Creek Conservancy was formed to raise this money from private interests since this project will benefit developers significantly. Many people oppose any bond funding to Waller Creek and associated trails, so this item alone may cause the bond package to not be approved by the citizens. Eliminate the \$9M to urban trails and grant matching programs. This is a luxury in a time when so many people need sidewalks, which are basic services that the city should provide equitably to all neighborhoods. Eliminate the \$2.25M for renovation of the Barton Springs Pool bathhouse because this is not necessary. The BSP bathhouse was recently brought up to code, has some remodeling and is ADA complaint. The majority of the community does not support the proposed renovations to the BSP bathhouse. \$6M has been spent at BSP already with various master plan projects, it's time to spend money fairly at other parks and recreational facilities. Eliminate the "Design of New Projects (Congress Ave. and Rainey St.)" for \$10M. This was not identified by city staff in the original bond package. Funding can be obtained for these projects from alternative sources (private/public partnerships). Citizens proposed additional projects like the Planetarium, but none of these were included in the package. Fully fund land acquisition for Watershed and PARD even if city staff did not list this as an urgent near-term need. It's critical to purchase some land for preservation. I urge to, please, recommend a wise small bond package of \$100-200M maximum. Utility bills and taxes have increased significantly in the last 2 years, and many people like me



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can't afford additional increases. The bond capacity analysis provided by city staff predicts a tax increase that is not representative of what will really occur. The tax increase predicted (\$38 yearly for a \$200K home for a bond package of \$385M, \$83 for \$625M) is based on only increasing the tax bracket, but residential appraisals will increase which will create a much higher yearly tax increase for the citizens. This tax increase is for the rest of our lives, and it will get compounded with future tax increases to finance other bonds (urban rail) and for the city budget. It will snowball and soon, many people like me won't be able to afford to live in Austin. The city is doing a disservice to the citizens by not concentrating on providing the basic needs like providing sidewalks where there are none, repairing deteriorating sidewalks, updating existing sidewalks to be ADA compliant, and repairing deteriorating existing facilities. These should be the priorities for the bonds instead of more infrastructure that can't be maintained or trails that are not basic necessities compared to sidewalks. City staff has presented a long list of "urgent near-term needs" and other projects, every need and desire. And the citizens task force has included some of these near-term projects as well as many of the projects that city staff does not consider urgent, for a bond package totaling \$659M. This long list has to be narrowed down to valid "urgent needs". The city couldn't keep up with all of the projects if more than \$200M were approved because current city staff is already working as hard as they can. More city staff would have to be hired to manage the additional bond projects, but there are no FTEs open in the budget. This bond package will only create additional jobs for consultants and contractors, because the city can't hire additional staff unless more money is added to the budget. It is not wise to approve this extremely high bond package all at once. There is no doubt that each project is a good one and would benefit the citizens, but many neighborhoods in south, east and north Austin are missing the basics that a city should provide, like sidewalks and roads, so it's critical to prioritize and approve the very important and very needed projects only, and leave the luxuries for alternative funding (such as private partnerships). While this large bond package will be proposed, the city budget continues to be tight and not able to keep up with maintenance of current facilities. Every year, the city contemplates closing libraries and swimming pools, reduces the budget of the libraries and park department to the bare minimum. Consequently, heritage trees, parks, cemeteries and recreational facilities go without maintenance. Why is the city adding new facilities and trails when they can't maintain what we have? It's becoming apparent to me that Austin is becoming a discriminatory city where there is a small elite group of people who can afford the luxuries and are active and vocal and get council support and funding for items that are nice but not necessarily urgent, but that suit their lifestyles better. But, all of the citizens of Austin pay for these. There are many neighborhoods in north, south and east Austin that don't have sidewalks but there is an emphasis in the bond package to fund a significant amount of trails and bicycle projects, while at the same time the funding for sidewalks was reduced by \$15M. I support connectivity but sidewalks are a basic need that has higher priority than trails. I know the bond task force wants to distribute the bond package through out Austin in an equitable manner, but there is a disproportional spread of priorities in the proposed bond package. There are many people that need sidewalks urgently so that they don't have to walk in the streets and run the risk of getting run over by cars, therefore the bonds should fund sidewalks before they fund trails. But, the Bond Advisory force proposes only \$30 M for sidewalks and \$51.75 M for trails. Please, change this and recommend instead \$45M for sidewalks and \$5.75M for trails (for only the near-term urgent needs trail projects such as greenbelts and preserves, and bikeways).

- Thank you for your hard work and concern for what is best for Austin and the people who live here. Please prioritize the following in this bond package:
 - Safety - please make sidewalks a priority. Sidewalks are a necessity, not a luxury. Even on the frontier, as soon as they had the resources to do so, towns added sidewalks. In a wonderful, modern city like Austin, pedestrians should not have to risk their lives walking in the street, or have to try to push their baby carriages through the weeds.
 - Responsibility - Please keep the bond as frugal as possible. Electric and water rates are on the rise, as is the cost of gasoline and food. We have all had to cut back and make choices. It's the right thing to do in this economic climate to keep the bond as small as possible. When times are better, there can be another bond that takes care of the luxuries. This one should really be about the bare necessities out of respect for the citizens of Austin who have all had to pare back their own personal luxuries.



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Dignity - Most every one of us will be in a cemetery sooner or later. We need to respect those who have gone before us - it's the right & proper thing to do. It is shameful to allow our cemeteries to fall into disrepair. It is more fiscally responsible to take care of the deferred maintenance now, rather than allow them to reach a crisis stage. Please consider funding open space acquisition rather than "affordable housing". Once open space is bulldozed and paved, it is gone forever. People don't love Austin because of the concrete and glass, they love it because of the beautiful trees, greenbelts and open spaces.

- I recommend the following. Primarily: Eliminate the \$2.25M for renovation of the Barton Springs Pool bathhouse because this is not necessary. The BSP bathhouse was recently brought up to code, has some remodeling and is ADA compliant. The majority of the community does not support the proposed renovations to the BSP bathhouse. \$6M has been spent at BSP already with various master plan projects, it's time to spend money fairly at other parks and recreational facilities. Fully fund land acquisition for Watershed and PARD even if city staff did not list this as an urgent near-term need. It's critical to purchase some land for preservation. Also: Reduce the amount of the total bond package to \$100-200M maximum. Fully fund the Dougherty Center to \$4M. This was classified as an urgent near-term need, but it's only getting half of the funding that city staff identified. Eliminate the \$15M for the Waller creek and trail improvements. The Waller Creek Conservancy was formed to raise this money from private interests since this project will benefit developers significantly. Many people oppose any bond funding to Waller Creek and associated trails, so this item alone may cause the bond package to not be approved by the citizens. Eliminate the "Design of New Projects (Congress Ave. and Rainey St.)" for \$10M. This was not identified by city staff in the original bond package. Funding can be obtained for these projects from alternative sources (private/public partnerships). Citizens proposed additional projects like the Planetarium, but none of these were included in the package. I urge to, please, recommend a wise small bond package of \$100-200M maximum. Utility bills and taxes have increased significantly in the last 2 years, and many people like me can't afford additional increases. The bond capacity analysis provided by city staff predicts a tax increase that is not representative of what will really occur. The tax increase predicted (\$38 yearly for a \$200K home for a bond package of \$385M, \$83 for \$625M) is based on only increasing the tax bracket, but residential appraisals will increase which will create a much higher yearly tax increase for the citizens. This tax increase is for the rest of our lives, and it will get compounded with future tax increases to finance other bonds (urban rail) and for the city budget. It will snowball and soon, many people like me won't be able to afford to live in Austin. The city is doing a disservice to the citizens by not concentrating on providing the basic needs like providing sidewalks where there are none, repairing deteriorating sidewalks, updating existing sidewalks to be ADA compliant, and repairing deteriorating existing facilities. These should be the priorities for the bonds instead of more infrastructure that can't be maintained or trails that are not basic necessities compared to sidewalks. City staff has presented a long list of "urgent near-term needs" and other projects, every need and desire. And the citizens task force has included some of these near-term projects as well as many of the projects that city staff does not consider urgent, for a bond package totaling \$659M. This long list has to be narrowed down to valid "urgent needs". The city couldn't keep up with all of the projects if more than \$200M were approved because current city staff is already working as hard as they can. More city staff would have to be hired to manage the additional bond projects, but there are no FTEs open in the budget. This bond package will only create additional jobs for consultants and contractors, because the city can't hire additional staff unless more money is added to the budget. It is not wise to approve this extremely high bond package all at once. There is no doubt that each project is a good one and would benefit the citizens, but many neighborhoods in south, east and north Austin are missing the basics that a city should provide, like sidewalks and roads, so it's critical to prioritize and approve the very important and very needed projects only, and leave the luxuries for alternative funding (such as private partnerships). While this large bond package will be proposed, the city budget continues to be tight and not able to keep up with maintenance of current facilities. Every year, the city contemplates closing libraries and swimming pools, reduces the budget of the libraries and park department to the bare minimum. Consequently, heritage trees, parks, cemeteries and recreational facilities go without maintenance. Why is the city adding new facilities and trails when they can't maintain what we have?
Please, eliminate from the bond package any project that was not classified as an "urgent near-term need" by city



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staff, with a few exemptions. See a list of these non-urgent items below. *[Note: no items were listed; only the commenter's email signature was provided below]*

Affordable Housing – related comments

- I urge you to increase the proposed funding for affordable housing in the 2012 Bond Package to at least \$100 million. Many tax-paying Austinites do not live downtown, nor could they afford to live downtown, and yet a substantial chunk of the proposed 2012 bond funding is going to downtown projects from which the aforementioned Austinites benefit only remotely. Another sizable chunk is going to the Mueller area, to the bicycling community, and to community projects that are wonderful and yet they don't help us address the critical affordable housing needs that Austin is experiencing. Many Austin neighborhoods along IH 35, north and south, are home to people who are desperately in need of affordable housing, in particular permanent supportive housing. Downtown is also home to people who need affordable housing. Equity is important.

NOTE: This comment or a similar version was received 49 times.

- There are many houses and apartments in Austin. Affordability can be achieved in creative ways, including by making sure utilities, taxes, transportation, and other necessities are not un-affordable. We need to have a dialogue in our community about what is best, rather than rushing to fund an orgy of development and construction of what may end up being neither affordable or livable. You know the hellish nightmare cities like Chicago and Detroit created for low income families by rushing in to poorly thought out "affordable housing" projects.

Parks & Open Space – related comments

- Fully fund the cemeteries to \$4M. Currently they are receiving \$2M, but they need \$4M at least. The cemeteries have a critical urgent near-term need that was not identified by city staff, even though the cemeteries meet the 4 criteria to be included as an urgent near-term need: the cemeteries are a public safety issue, there is serious infrastructure failure (facilities, roads and irrigation), there is a significant degradation of services, and State law is not being followed.
- I want to express my support for Parks, Trails, and Open Spaces. The beauty of Austin's parks, trails and open spaces is an inviting and unique feature that this city provides its residents and many visitors from all over the world. I strongly believe we should continue to foster the funding for such. Therefore, I fully support the following.
 - \$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail which will connect more than 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin
 - Full Funding for Bike/Ped Projects
 - Full Funding for Open Space Conservation
 - Full Funding for Parks.

NOTE: This comment or a similar version was received 57 times.

- Thank you for including open space, trails and parks on the possible list for funding by city bonds. I'm so happy to find those items on bond elections, that I vote yes with ease and I never complain about taxes or fees. I'm particularly fond of open space conservation. Parks that allow residents to hike, bike and explore are also items I think are well worth my taxes because they encourage and make it easier for residents to get healthful exercise and they further cement the image of Austin as being park and open space friendly. Please make sure you give full funding to all these projects.
- What distinguishes Austin, Texas from most cities in the country is our very pro-active and intentional protection of water, green and open space. This feature drives new tourists and outdoor enthusiasts into our city every day;



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attracts businesses with an employee base that values our outdoor culture, and supports the health and well being of nearly 2 million people. We need to continue to acquire and protect open space to ensure our continued regional leadership for land and resource protection and to ensure that we have clean and plentiful water for the future of our community.

- I just want to register my support for the bonds for open space and trails. This is the most important issue to me. While I'm at it, I should mention how little I want the city funding a museum for each different ethnicity in the city, since that is the logical precedent you are setting.
- I have been a resident and citizen of Austin for 22 years. I am a regular Barton Springs swimmer, and I vote. I request that you eliminate the \$2.25M for renovation of the Barton Springs Pool bathhouse because this is not necessary. The BSP bathhouse was recently brought up to code, has some remodeling and is ADA compliant. The majority of the community does not support the proposed renovations to the BSP bathhouse. \$6M has been spent at BSP already with various master plan projects, it's time to spend money fairly at other parks and recreational facilities. Fully fund land acquisition for Watershed and PARD even if city staff did not list this as an urgent near-term need. It's critical to purchase some land for preservation.

City Facilities - related comments

- No comments received.

Transportation/Mobility - related comments

- Please include funding for the 43rd & Duval Improvements Project in your recommendations to the City Council. The Hyde Park Contact Team, Hyde Park Neighborhood Association and Hancock Neighborhood Association all adopted resolutions in support of the project. This century-old commercial hub, is a very busy intersection that serves all of its neighbors and is in need of these safety and community improvements to serve all who access these local businesses on foot, by bicycle, by bus and by auto. Please restore at least the \$250,000 previously allocated for the project in the CIP, to move this project forward.
NOTE: The above comment was received twice.
- I had the pleasure of serving with several of you in 2006 on the BEAC and others I have visited with in the last several months. To all of you, I thank you for your willingness to commit the countless hours you are spending evaluating the numerous worthy projects being presented to you for consideration. There are so many needs and so little public resources available that you have a near impossible task. That said, one category rises to the top of the priority scale in my mind and that is our long neglected transportation system. Austin has some of the most highly-congested corridors in the state. For that reason, transportation projects should be a top priority for this bond election. In 2006, we included funds to rebuild and restore some of our major arterials, but not a dollar was spent increasing capacity. Since then, we have experienced approximately 200,000 new residents driving on our streets. In 2010, we approved almost \$100 million in "transportation" projects, but precious little of those dollars were spent increasing capacity - most of the money was allocated to sidewalks, bike lanes, boardwalks and other worthwhile quality of life enhancements – but not transportation.
- Please prioritize the 2012 bond funding to focus on transportation projects that alleviate congestion on roads such as Mopac, 360, IH-35, Burnet, and Lamar.
- As Austin continues to grow daily, our means of getting around by our own cars in a timely manner is becoming extinct. Austin has some of the most highly-congested corridors in the state, so transportation projects should be a top priority for this bond election. I support spending a good portion of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects that address peak-hour congestion such as I-35, MoPac, and North Lamar/Burnet. I drive around town during all times of the day with my job and if I ever get remotely close to the rush hours trying to get to meetings,



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I might as well be prepared to be very late or leave very far in advance, so any initiative we can take to move forward to help with our congestion will definitely be beneficial to everyone who has to be on the road. The last thing we want Austin to turn into is a Houston-like replica of traffic.

- Favor bikeways and parks; and I vote.
- As Austin continues to grow daily, our means of getting around by our own cars in a timely manner is becoming extinct. Austin has some of the most highly-congested corridors in the state, so transportation projects should be a top priority for this bond election. I support spending a good portion of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects that address peak-hour congestion such as I-35, MoPac, and North Lamar/Burnet. I drive around town during all times of the day with my job and if I ever get remotely close to the rush hours trying to get to meetings, I might as well be prepared to be very late or leave very far in advance, so any initiative we can take to move forward to help with our congestion will definitely be beneficial to everyone who has to be on the road. The last thing we want Austin to turn into is a Houston-like replica of traffic. Thank you so much for your time and service!
- Sidewalks are a basic need for many in Austin and should be given a higher priority than trails. While I respect that the bond task force wants to distribute the bond package throughout Austin in an equitable manner, the current spread of priorities remains disproportional. Many Austinites desperately need sidewalks so they do not have to walk in the streets, risking getting hit by cars.
- Austin has some of the most highly-congested corridors in the state. Transportation projects should be a top priority for this bond election. I personally believe that traffic congestion will eventually choke growth and development where we all think density should be located, downtown. I would prefer not to see Austin develop in a sprawling manor. Without addressing traffic, I believe we jeopardize continued prosperity and create a further divide between the have and have-nots.
NOTE: The above comment was received twice.
- I support spending the majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects that address peak-hour congestion such as I-35, MoPac, and North Lamar/Burnet. Thank you for your service and consideration of ideas from all constituents.

Community Projects

- I urge the City of Austin Bond Election Advisory Task Force to identify and recommend the **Austin Planetarium's science museum, planetarium and technology center** as a project for funding in the City of Austin 2012 Bond election. Furthermore, I urge the Austin City Council to include the Austin Planetarium project in the City of Austin 2012 bond package for the proposed amount of \$3 million. Austin, TX is the largest city in the nation without a planetarium and it also lacks a full-spectrum science museum. In a city that is touted as Silicon Hills the conspicuous absence of these crucial community assets is unacceptable. A facility, such as the one proposed by the Austin Planetarium, is certain to enhance the community in a variety of ways. It will provide an unparalleled educational destination for area schools to enjoy on field trips; it will provide a place for the science-minded technology workforce to enjoy with their families, thus aiding in the recruitment and retention of the technology workforce; it will offer a venue for the robust technology community of Austin to display the incredible innovations and products that are developed right here in our backyard; it will create a new tourist destination, enhancing the experience of visitors to the State Capital and increase revenue generated in the local tourism and hospitality industries; it will stand as a world-class model of architecture and sustainability, and be a source of pride for all Texans; it will entertain, educate and inspire our community to pursue academic paths and careers in the important fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The time has come for the City of Austin to help with the development of a science museum, planetarium and technology center in Austin.



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Please include the Austin Planetarium on the 2012 City of Austin Bond Election Advisory Task Force recommendations as well as the final 2012 Bond package. Together we can finally give Austin and Central Texas a place to expand their horizons and reach for the stars.

NOTE: The above comment was a form letter received 430 times.

- On behalf of Hill Country Conservancy (HCC), please accept my grateful thanks for your extraordinary public service, perseverance, dedication and fortitude. Thank you! I write today to ask you to include \$3mm for VCT Phase II, at least \$50mm for Open Space and at least \$110mm for Parks in your funding recommendations to City Council, and I commend your policy recommendations. I may be a contrarian voice but I think the Austin City Council erred in asking you to craft a \$400mm package. I believe a \$400mm package is inadequate and short-sighted for a community that is # 1 on many “best cities” lists in America, especially considering that the population – and community “needs” – are increasing dramatically daily. Providing funding for the Violet Crown Trail (VCT) will provide comprehensive multi-modal transportation neighborhood connectivity to libraries, parks and retail centers and safe routes to schools in south Austin. VCT will be the “trunk line” of an extensive ped/bike system that will connect the ped/bike bridge over Barton Creek, Travis Country, Oak Hill, Circle C, Sendera, Deer Park and many other neighborhoods – to LBJWC, the Veloway, Zilker Park and the Lady Bird Lake Butler Trail in addition to the connectivity previously mentioned. These connections are “past due” and merit full funding. A recent nationwide telephone poll (see link below) found that 83 percent of those surveyed support federal funding for sidewalks and bike lanes, and that 91 percent of those under the age of 30 backed the spending (Austin’s demographic!). Central Texas citizens, and particularly voters in bond elections, have responded favorably – and voted for! – parks, trails and open space funding for more than twenty years. Greenways and connectivity are the # 1 amenity sought by homebuyers according to homebuilder association polls. HCC has executed agreements pertaining to VCT with the cities of Austin and Sunset Valley, COA PARD, TPWD (\$200K funding); TxDOT and USFWS. VCT is in the CAMPO long-range plan. VCT was awarded \$105K ARRA funding (aka “stimulus”) to create a safe ped/bike crossing at U.S. Highway 290/Brodie. That crossing has been completed. COA PWs, using a \$300K federal grant obtained by HCC, is working to make the seven-mile segment of VCT Phase II (just south of Sunset Valley to Veloway/LBJWC) shovel ready by early next year. In addition to these public agencies, HCC is working closely with the Austin Parks Foundation, American YouthWorks and more than twenty other organizations and neighborhoods to get the Violet Crown Trail built – soon!

NOTE: The above comment was received twice.

- I respectfully request that the Bond Election Advisory Task Force include the Mexic-Arte Museum Building Project in the 2012 City of Austin Bond Package for \$10 million dollars. Mexic-Arte Museum, a highly respected cultural landmark, is “The Official Mexican and Mexican American Fine Art Museum of Texas.” Mexic-Arte Museum has a 28 year history of outstanding community programming and significant historical and cultural exhibits. Mexic-Arte Museum has served thousands of children through tours, after-school programs, workshops, lectures and outreach programs. Mexic-Arte Museum is the only museum in the United States to reach an art exchange agreement with the government of Mexico to exhibit its most treasured works of art through an agreement with the National Council for the Arts and Culture. A new beautiful, iconic and world class museum building will showcase and teach cultural heritage with dignity and pride for generations to come. The new building will contribute to the vitality of Austin by providing economic development and bring tourism that generates business dollars. A new facility will allow Mexic-Arte Museum: To increase the amount of space to 52,145 sq. ft. for exhibits and education programs with added improvements: exhibition galleries, an auditorium, a shop/café, permanent galleries, collection storage, classrooms, a lobby, and public art. To widen sidewalks and a plaza for outdoor public engagement in downtown Austin. To foster major economic development and tourism creating additional jobs, through museum construction, retail, service, and hospitality industries. To increase investments in collateral businesses in the downtown area, housing and other economic activity. The Mexic-Arte Museum has the incredible opportunity to build a world class iconic museum that will transform many lives in a positive manner. I urge you to make this a 'must do' project to put forth to the



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citizens for the fall bond election. This addition to the bond proposal will help sell the entire package to the citizens of Austin. Thank you for your consideration. I am a native Austinite and my family has lived on West Seventh Street, near downtown, for over 70 years. I have a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University and have worked and been active in the arts in Austin for many years. As an active volunteer with Mexic-Arte Museum in it's many areas I have come to know and understand the mission and the value of this organization to the city and to it's citizens. Thank you for your consideration of our request and our contributions to Austin.

Other Comments

- It's my understanding that in 2006 there was a bond election for the DAC which passed for 3 million. What happened to this funding? Isn't it illegal not to have used those funds that Austin citizens voted to do ? Also it's my understanding that the Zach theatre received 10 million from the City of Austin - a private organization. I would like to hear what you have to say about the above please.
- Look at the Montopolis neighborhood where many residential streets have no side walks at all and our children either walk through some ones yard or in the streets. I look at the bond package and I realize sidewalks are used by children, the elderly and those too poor to have cars while trails are used by the upwardly mobile and the young Turks. I look at our rec center which was actually built by Delores Catholic Church to be used as a gym and catholic school and I look at the bond package from last year which included the Lady Bird Lake Boardwalk and bicycle lanes; again for the upwardly mobile young adults and the young Turks living in the inner core. . I look at our Montopolis Neighborhood Plan and it's unfilled recommendations and unfulfilled dreams. I look at our Montopolis streets that either weren't built or fail to connect. I look at the entire South East quadrant of Austin with only one location with a traffic calming device which is according to City staff experimental and the low dollar version. I look at my electric bill which is already higher than it was this time last year. I look at my property tax bill and it too is higher in spite of a loss in value. I look at the homeless people on our street corners and their make shift cardboard tents hidden in the bushes. Then I look at the recommended bond package. This is a City of the well to do, both those who made it on their own and those who made it through their families place in life. And while I hope the F-1 provides a source of jobs in South East Austin; I also think of the status of the F-1 attendees and the contrast it illuminates between it's attendees and the average South East Austin resident. Austin which used to be a Mecca for UT students, hippies, cosmic cowboys and artists is now a City building for those who make a significantly more than the median Travis County income. Austin has become a City of those with a few gold coins in their pockets while the rest of us eat the crumbs off of their tables and are expected to be grateful for them.